



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

NEWS RELEASE

First Nations Summit Calls on Governments to Immediately Implement Recommendations Contained in the Federal and Provincial Auditors General Reports on the BC Treaty Negotiation Process

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Coast Salish Territory (North Vancouver, BC) – Leaders of the First Nations Summit, who are meeting in North Vancouver this week, are calling on the federal and provincial governments to work together with First Nations to implement the recommendations contained within the federal and provincial Auditors General reports on the BC treaty negotiation process that were simultaneously released earlier this week.

Federal Auditor General Sheila Fraser and Acting Provincial Auditor General Arn van Iersel attended today's First Nations Summit meeting and were commended for their efforts to conduct a detailed assessment of Canada and BC's management and administration of the BC treaty negotiation process. The two audits were the result of a resolution passed by First Nations Summit Chiefs in 2004 calling for the *Auditor General of Canada to review the conduct of Treaty Negotiations in BC, the implementation of modern and historic treaties and loan funding arrangements for First Nations.*

"These reports have provided considerable insights into the procedural barriers impeding the ability to reach fair and just treaty agreements in BC", said Grand Chief Edward John, a member of the First Nations Summit Political Executive. "We look forward to next week's meeting of the Principals (the Minister of Indian Affairs, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and the First Nations Summit). We plan to take that opportunity to hold both Minister Prentice and Minister de Jong to account for how we can work together immediately to implement the recommendations contained in the audits".

"These audit reports have confirmed many of the concerns and frustrations identified by First Nations over the years with respect to the main stumbling blocks to reaching fair honourable and equitable treaties", added Chief Judith Sayers, another member of the Summit's Political Executive. "These include: the federal government's inability to bring their negotiation positions including Canada's comprehensive claims policy, in line with recent case law on Aboriginal Title and Rights issues; Canada's lack of willingness to recognize that treaty negotiations are about the recognition and reconciliation of our inherent Title and Rights; and a lack of consistency between the New Relationship and governments treaty negotiation mandates."

As the Auditor General of BC's report says "*there are indications that the failure to deliver treaties, limited interim benefits, and the relatively slow pace of negotiations are actually straining the relations between the government and First Nations*". We must address these issues and move forward immediately.

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The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. Further background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

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